SIV ENVELOPE TRIMER

RELATED APPLICATIONS AND INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of international patent application Serial No. PCT/US2019/056867 filed Oct. 18, 2019, which published as PCT Publication No. WO 2020/081895 on Apr. 23, 2020, and which claims priority to U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 62/747,650, filed on Oct. 18, 2018.

FEDERAL FUNDING LEGEND

[0002] This invention was made with government support under grant number AI100663 awarded by the National Institutes of Health. The government has certain rights in the invention.

[0003] The foregoing applications, and all documents cited therein or during their prosecution ("appln cited documents") and all documents cited or referenced in the appln cited documents, and all documents cited or referenced herein ("herein cited documents"), and all documents cited or referenced in herein cited documents, together with any manufacturer's instructions, descriptions, product specifications, and product sheets for any products mentioned herein or in any document incorporated by reference herein, are hereby incorporated herein by reference, and may be employed in the practice of the invention. More specifically, all referenced documents are incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual document was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

SEQUENCE STATEMENT

[0004] The instant application contains a Sequence Listing which has been submitted electronically and is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. Said ASCII copy, was created Dec. 5, 2019, is named Y7969_99051SL.txt and is 101 kbytes in size.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The present invention relates to epitope-targeted SIV and HIV vaccines. The invention relates to epitopes that elicit antibodies that are broadly neutralizing against HIV. The invention provides epitopes that efficiently stimulate germline antibody production. The invention provides novel envelope glycoproteins which may be utilized as HIV-1 vaccine immunogens, antigens for crystallization, and for identification of broadly neutralizing antibodies. The invention encompasses preparation and purification of immunogenic compositions which are formulated into vaccines of the present invention.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0006] AIDS, or Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, is caused by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and is characterized by several clinical features including wasting syndromes, central nervous system degeneration and profound immunosuppression that results in opportunistic infections and malignancies. HIV is a member of the lentivirus family of animal retroviruses, which include the visna virus of sheep and the bovine, feline, and simian immunodeficiency viruses (SIV). Two closely related types of HIV, designated HIV-I and HIV-2, have been identified thus far, of which HIV-I is by far the most common cause of AIDS. However, HIV-2, which differs in genomic structure and antigenicity, causes a similar clinical syndrome.

[0007] An infectious HIV particle consists of two identical strands of RNA, each approximately 9.2 kb long, packaged within a core of viral proteins. This core structure is surrounded by a phospholipid bilayer envelope derived from the host cell membrane that also includes virally-encoded membrane proteins (Abbas et al., Cellular and Molecular Immunology, 4th edition, W.B. Saunders Company, 2000, p. 454). The HIV genome has the characteristic 5'-LTR-Gag-Pol-Env-LTR-3' organization of the retrovirus family. Long terminal repeats (LTRs) at each end of the viral genome serve as binding sites for transcriptional regulatory proteins from the host and regulate viral integration into the host genome, viral gene expression, and viral replication.

[0008] The HIV genome encodes several structural proteins. The gag gene encodes structural proteins of the nucleocapsid core and matrix. The pol gene encodes reverse transcriptase (RT), integrase (IN), and viral protease (PR) enzymes required for viral replication. The tat gene encodes a protein that is required for elongation of viral transcripts. The rev gene encodes a protein that promotes the nuclear export of incompletely spliced or unspliced viral RNAs. The vif gene product enhances the infectivity of viral particles. The vpr gene product promotes the nuclear import of viral DNA and regulates G2 cell cycle arrest. The vpu and nef genes encode proteins that down regulate host cell CD4 expression and enhance release of virus from infected cells. The env gene encodes the viral envelope glycoprotein that is translated as a 160-kilodalton (kDa) precursor (gp160) and cleaved by a cellular protease to yield the external 120-kDa envelope glycoprotein (gp120) and the transmembrane 41-kDa envelope glycoprotein (gp41), which are required for the infection of cells (Abbas et al., Cellular and Molecular Immunology, 4th edition, W.B. Saunders Company, 2000, pp. 454-456). gp140 is a modified form of the Env glycoprotein, which contains the external 120-kDa envelope glycoprotein portion and the extracellular part of the gp41 portion of Env and has characteristics of both gp120 and gp41. The nef gene is conserved among primate lentiviruses and is one of the first viral genes that is transcribed following infection. In vitro, several functions have been described, including down-regulation of CD4 and MHC class I surface expression, altered T-cell signaling and activation, and enhanced viral infectivity.

[0009] HIV infection initiates with gp120 on the viral particle binding to the CD4 and chemokine receptor molecules (e.g., CXCR4, CCR5) on the cell membrane of target cells such as CD4+ T-cells, macrophages and dendritic cells. The bound virus fuses with the target cell and reverse transcribes the RNA genome. The resulting viral DNA integrates into the cellular genome, where it directs the production of new viral RNA, and thereby viral proteins and new virions. These virions bud from the infected cell membrane and establish productive infections in other cells. This process also kills the originally infected cell. HIV can also kill cells indirectly because the CD4 receptor on uninfected T-cells has a strong affinity for gp120 expressed on the surface of infected cells. In this case, the uninfected cells bind, via the CD4 receptor-gp120 interaction, to infected cells and fuse to form a syncytium, which cannot survive. Destruction of CD4+ T-lymphocytes, which are critical to